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Impacts Of History Scholars To The Reviving Of History In Nigeria Educational System

Abstract

The systematical and dynamical shape of the academic field of history in Nigeria educational system in recent times is admirable. The revising of existing canons in Africa historiography andthe historical society of Nigeria has enjoyed a promising scholastical attitude which focuses on the birth of true facts. The transfer of historical knowledge coupled with the initiation of young Nigerians into their ab intra and ab extra environment through historical materials can be credited to the dedicated efforts of committed historians. The review of the impacts of these historical investors is not therefore favoritism. The paper therefore, wishes to assess the contribution of history scholars to Nigerian educational system. The paper will assess the impacts of few selected scholars in the historical society and also recommend improvements in their works and call their attention to new areas of interest in the educational system.

Keyword: Systematical, Historiography, Scholastical, Favoritism, Investors

Introduction and Background Study

A vacuum of clarity must, at the alpha of this discourse be provided. This is expedient to avoid misconception and to correct any erroneous expectation of an overglorification or bias segmentation of any historical legend. It must also be borne in mind that the paper is not making any attempt to serve as an advertising article for these scholars books. It should however be noted that the paper is aimed at unmasking the notorious impacts of certain scholars in the field of historical survey who have left certain landmarks on the Nigeria educational system. To therefore attempt to discuss all the scholars who have contributed to the system in one way or the other would of sincerity referred to an overload of this work. The exemption of quality numbers of these scholars should not at all be misunderstood as a deliberate attempt to address them as unimportant. The selected few here are therefore supposed to be seen as propitious and inescapable tailored toward the requirement of the paper.

By history scholars, I mean a set of intellectuals dedicated to writing and rewriting of historical materials, who also teaches or have thought history or related courses and in turn has left a landmark on the educational system of Nigeria. In this work I shall entertain you with fourteen of these scholars, they range from: Rev. Samuel Johnson, Michael Ajayi Crowder, Toyin Falola, Elizabeth Isichei, Abu Boahen, J.F Ade Ajayi, K. O Dike, Obaro Ikimi, Okon Eden Oya, Walter Rodney, Adiele E. Afigbo, Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, E. J Alagoa and Oladipo Arifalo. The choice of these scholars is strictly based on the observations of their immerse contribution toward the system.¹

A short survey of the origin and erstwhile state of the educational system in Nigeria will serve as a guide as we assess the contributions of these scholars. It might interest you to know that before the coming of the colonial masters, Africans had their own unique way of training, not only the young ones, but also the adults. The most interesting aspect of it was that, the education was not an end or for mere certification without assurance of being employed, their educational enterprise was effective and goal oriented. Though the subjects were not clearly noted but it was said that Africa has educational curriculum though not documented. One of them as noted by Fanfuwa (1974) stated that "To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large". This I suspect, was through historical study. This is to establish the fact that history is part of the Nigeria traditional educational system. By Traditional educational system therefore, I mean the educational system in practice before the coming of the European.

The birth of colonial educational system in Nigeria gave a vicissitude to the traditional system. The birth of history in the educational system of Nigeria can be directly traced to the introduction of Western Education into Nigeria in the seventeenth century. Following the establishment of the Methodist Mission (being the first school) in Badagry under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. De Craft in 1843, history was one of

the major courses introduced into the system, others includes: English Grammar and Composition, Latin and Greek Grammar, Geography, Hebrew, Logic, Geometry, Chemistry, Physiology, Drawing, Rhetoric and others in that caliber. Since this epoch, history has remained a permanent discipline in the Nigerian educational system though; have since inception receives contextual change. The study of history has remained a shadow of what it should represent due to the fact that certain myths needed to be corrected in the contexts across all levels of study. The need for such betterment has halted most history scholars in investigational oblivion and the rugged escape of few of them has caused drastical change in the system. This few remain yet, my focus in this work. Reverend Samuel Johnson impart will enjoy a starting point.

The Reverend Samuel Johnson

There is no reason for beginning with the contribution of Reverend Samuel Johnson other than the fact that I have to begin at the beginning. Reverend Samuel Johnson though now late, was an Anglican priest and a Nigerian historian. He lived between 24 June 1846 and 29 April 1901. Late Samuel Johnson was a recaptive 'Creole' in Freetown, Sierra Leone. According to available records, Reverend Samuel was an Omoba of the Oyo clan as a descendant of the Alaafin Abiodun of Oyo. His popular work on Yoruba history in 1897 was the catalyst of his fame. Unfortunately, this work was misplaced by his British publishers. After his death, his brother Dr. Obadiah Johnson re-compiled and rewrote the book, using the reverend's copious notes as a guide. In 1921, he released it as A History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate.⁵ A History of the Yoruba was a book that marked a pivot in historical scholarship in the Nigeria Educational system. The book which was printed in Great Britain by Lowe and Brydone (Printers) Limited, London was propelled by the view that educated natives of Yoruba are well acquainted with the history of England and with that of Rome and Greece, but of the history of their own country they know nothing whatever.6

It is inspiring to know that Samuel Johnson was said to have labored on the work for about 20 years though was unfortunate not to see the accomplishment of his work. The thirty-five chapter work on The History of the Yoruba thoroughly investigated into every aspect of their lives, culture, grammar, economy, polities and their relationship with their neighbours including their European traders and missionaries, in short, the book exhausted all the areas of the Yoruba Country as referred to by him. The book remains the first secondary material of writing the history of the Yoruba people and has been referenced by over one thousand books and articles. No doubt the book has contributed largely to the system and remains the best source of writing Yoruba history. This impact has remain in the system as the younger generations have access to the veracity of Yoruba history, today there is no library or bookshop that one cannot find this sagacious work.

Toyin Falola

ToyinFalola, who obtained his B. A. (Honors) in History and Ph.D., (for thesis "The Political Economy of Ibadan, c.1830- 1900.") in 1981 and in 1976 respectively from the University of Ife, Nigeria, is no doubt worthy of commendation.8 With the field of historical bias: "African history since the nineteenth century, with concentration on West Africa, Nigeria, and the Yoruba-speaking people", Toyin has made unobliterated contribution to the educational system of Nigeria. He has received several honors and awards from and within the country and has published more than 132 books since 1983 most of which centers on his area of interest. Apart from his published books, Toyin has presented quality numbers of articles which the actual figure cannot be established. He was also featured in more than 168 books besides more than 100 featured articles and up to 90 reviews, it is sure that Toyin is still working on some works in serpiginous.9 These different works has given birth to several revolutions in the field of history most especially in the country. In 1989, 1991 and 1992 Toyin Falola published the renowned History of Nigeria, Vol. 1, Nigeria Before 1800, History of Nigeria, Vol. 11, Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century Vol. 2, and History of Nigeria: Nigeria in the twentieth century Vol. 3 respectively. The books gave a clear historical summit on Nigeria History especially in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The books contributed largely to the writing of Nigeria History and have remained source of references for the later writers. 10 One of the most famous books of Toyin which has crossed the border of Africa is "Africa" volume one to volume five. In 2000, Toyin entertained the historical society of Africa with Africa, vol. 1: Peoples and States (edited), Africa, vol. 2: Cultures and Societies (edited), Africa, Vol. 3, Africa, Vol. 4, The End of Colonial Rule: Nationalism and Decolonization (edited) and of course, Africa, Vol. 5, Africa: Contemporary Africa (edited). The publications of these books influences the study of History in most Africa States since correct details of the history of the continent are now accessible.¹¹

It is doubtable if Toyin Falola ever missed a year without a publication, his numerous texts has remain the sources of historical interests and readers across the field are committed to reading Toyin's works since it is reliable and of course enjoyable. His works has influenced many Africa writers who later wrote their books or in honour of Toyin Falola and some who deliberately published volumes to eulogize him. One of them is Niyi Afolabi who wrote, "Toyin Falola, The Man, The Mask, The Muse". The 989pages book exhausted the contribution of the Legend and exclaimed that "we have not conspired to suggest that his mission is complete, but indeed, we have elected to express a token of appreciation for his selfless and restless undertaking in form of what may be termed an academic labour of love". Another work was edited by Akinwumi Ogundiran which was titled "Pre-colonial Nigeria: An Essay in Honour of Toyin Falola". The work exposes the contribution of Toyin to the reviving of pre-colonial and post-colonial history of Nigeria and its impact on the Educational System.

Elizabeth Isichei

Elizabeth Isichei is the only female scholar that this work is blessed with. Truly, the legend has proved to her society that "whatever men can do, women can do also". 15 She is a professor of Religion Studies at the University of Otago. Isichei received the Degree of Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) from the University of Canterbury in 1990 for her writings on Africa.16 She began research into Africa past in 1967 and thought history in Africa Universities for about sixteen years. She has published a good number of books which has enjoyed mass acceptability in the historical society. Some of her works include: "The Ibo People and The Europeans, 1973", "A History of Nigeria, 1983" and "A History of Christianity in Africa, 1995," to mention few. One of her most famous book that has continued to impact the Nigeria Educational System was "A History of Africa Society to 1870". The book provides a fully up-to-date textbook, thematically organized, for undergraduate students of African History focuses on the changing modes of production, on gender relations and on ecology, laying particular stress on viewing history from below. The first section of the three sectioned book addressed historiographic analysis, covering the period from dawn to pre-history to the end of the early Iron Age. The second section and third organized on regional lives, while the second ends in the sixteenth century, the third carried the story to 1870.16 The book also enjoyed a talk on the address of some Africa states as "stateless". The agitation for volume II of the work was in fact expressed by herself.¹⁷ This was to cover 1870-1995. Without equivocation, Ishichei has contributed greatly to the system and her works remains one of the earliest references in history.

J.F Ade Ajayi

Professor Jacob Festus Adeniyi Ajayi (JFA) is a distinguished Professor Emeritus of History and the doyen of the iconic Ibadan School of History. Born on 26 May, 1929 at Ikole Ekiti to Ezekiel Adeniji Ajayi and died 9th August, 2014, Prof. Emeritus Ajayi was one of the most eminent members of that generation of African historians who revealed and battled the epistemological illogicality of Africans not having a history of their own until the arrival of Europeans. 18 With his intellectual engagement in the field, he saved Africa from the ignominy of giving credit to Europe for History and Civilization in Africa. He, therefore, rolled back the deterministic assumptions of European scholarship and the epistemological illogicality and fallacies inherent in European historiography. His 1961 essay titled: 'Colonialism: An Episode in African History' was path-breaking. In that work, Ajayi successfully presented a philosophy of history that countered Europe's pseudo-intellectual position.¹⁹ Besides this, Ajayi has published many books which have added great impact on the Educational society of Nigeria, some of which include: "Milestones in Nigerian History, 1962"; "Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century, 1964"; "Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria, 1985", "A Thousand Years of West African History, 1965"; and "The Narrative of Samuel Ajayi Crowther" besides featured works, articles and reviews. His popular work that added unconcealed aroma to Nigeria educational system was "A Thousand Years of West African History, 1965".20 The book has attracted many readers across the historical world. To appreciate little of his contribution, on November, 2012 the Degree of Doctor of Letters

(D.Litt.), honoriscausa was conferred on him by the University of Ibadan in recognition of his distinct contributions to scholarship and global understanding. In March 2014, Ajayi was also presented with the Nigeria's Centenary Award by the Federal Government in commemoration of the 100 years of the founding of Nigeria.

Kenneth Onwuka Dike

The deliberate choice to discuss the impact of this erudite historian is propelled by his numerous citations in most of today's African texts and writers. Kenneth Onwuka Dike (Late) is a pathfinder and godfather of African History. He was noted for setting up the Nigerian National Archives and for serving as roving ambassador for Biafra during Eastern Nigeria's bid for secession. As both historian and leader of the University of Ibadan's post-graduate school in Nigeria. The 1950s proved to have been Dike's most productive scholarly years – preceding his university administrative career and later political activity in the interest of an independent Biafra. Michael Crowder submitted that, Dike was the one who "Nigerianized Nigerian history".²¹ In 1953 Dike Reported the Preservation and Administration of Historical Records in Nigeria and was published. This work had to do with setting up the Nigerian National Archives which he later served as director. In this same documentation and preservation vein, Dike served for a time as well as chair of the Nigerian Antiquities Commission. Through his countless works, he gave the world an understanding of the way trade was carried out along the Niger River and in the Niger Delta during the 19th century. Of course, Dike's best known book is "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1890" (1956).²² The book examined the "detailed process by which the existing native governments were gradually supplanted by British consular power and following it the Crown Colony administration." It was based on his doctoral dissertation, looked at how economic change affected the political and social life of 19th century Nigeria. He also published other books which include: "A Hundred years of British Rule in Nigeria 1957", "The Origins of the Niger Mission 1958", among others. His historical work is quoted mostly in most works on Nigeria and even Africa History example is Michael Crowder's The Story of Nigeria (1973). His books has served and still serving the students in Nigeria Educational System.

Albert Abu Boahen

An African or Ghanaian historian Albert Adu Boahen's impact is the next under examination. Boahen is an Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Ghana, Legon, who devoted his life to correcting the false impression created by many Western historians of the colonial era that Africa had "no history", or that, if it had any history, it was full of barbarity and backwardness.²³ Adu Boahen has published more than

fourteen books and numerous articles in learned journals on African history. He was known as Africa's foremost historian, respected both by those who disagreed with him because they thought his historical notions were of a "romantic" nature, and those who adored the boldness of his imagination and the wide scope of his research. His PhD in African History which he got in 1959 with the thesis: "Britain, the Sahara, and the Western Sudan, 1788-1861 (1964)" (later published) revealed his passion. His ground-breaking textbooks have contributed immensely to the education system of Nigeria especially, "Topics in West African History (1966)" and "West Africa Since 1800: the revolutionary years (1967)". These two books on West Africa history uncovered detailed information on West Africa History and Kingdoms, the book was used in both secondary schools and in higher institutions. It has remained one of the major sources of writing the subcontinent history.²⁴ His other publications includes: "African Perspectives on Colonialism (1987)". "The Revolutionary Years: West Africa Since 1800, (1980). "UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. VII, Abridged Edition: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935 (1985), "General History Of Africa, (1990), "African Perspectives on European Colonialism, (2011), among countable of others sagacious works. Indeed there is no doubt that Boahen works has great impact on the Nigeria Educational System.

ObaroIkimi

Professor ObaroIkimi is an icon of the Ibadan School of History and a foremost historian of his generation who has touched many lives intellectually and spiritually. He was formerly an old Vicar of the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, old Ife Road, Ibadan before he was elevated from being a Canon to an Archdeacon in the Ibadan Diocese of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. The pioneering effort of the Obaro Ikime generation of historians in revolutionizing African History has attracted scholars from all over the world. Dr O.B. Osadolor presented a paper for The Occasion of an International Conference in Honour of Obaro Ikime at 70.25 Held at the faculty of Arts University of Ibadan, Ibadan. The paper which was titled - Obaro Ikime: in the shadow of his works uncovered the achievements of the legend. Ikime has published many books which have equally contributed to the Nigeria educational system. This includes among others: "The Fall of Nigeria", "Groundwork of Nigerian History", and his latest book was titled "History, The Historian and The Nation" His edited work on the Groundwork of Nigerian History remains the magnum opus on Nigerian History.²⁶ The book remains one of the earliest books that investigated into Pre-colonial Nigeria and since 1900. Though the book addressed the problems of historical investigation, it is important to opine that the book left some certain issues unconcluded, perhaps due to

unobtainability of reference materials as at the time of the publication. There are controversial matters arising among readers today on some of these unascertained issues. In order to bail this young historian out of oblivion, a review of the book will be expedient.

Okon Eden Oya

The scholarship pursuit of this notable scholar is quiet surprising. He is a former professor of African and African-American History in Howard University, Washington D.C, USA and later a professor of History, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Okon has published or/and edited more than 29books.²⁷ Paramount among them includes: Slavery to Public Service, (1992), Africa Diaspora and the Black Experience in New World Slavery, (1992), Slavery and Slave Trade in Nigeria Area, (2010), Africa History: Some problems in Methodology and Perspectives (2004). He has contributed numerous chapters to important books and published many articles in learned journals especially in areas of slavery and slave trade, historiography and historical methods, Democracy and Democratization in Africa and America Civil War and Reconstruction. His book: "Africa History: Some problems in Methodology and Perspectives" remains a useful companion to many university history students, especially those taking Historiography and Historical Methods for post-graduate degrees. The book corrected the wrong approach to Africa History and criticized the Euro-centric view of Africa History; Sources of history were equally discussed, with proper elucidation on Afro-centric perspective on Africa history, the book leaves us with a clear understanding of Africa history and its sources.²⁸ Without equivocation, the book remains the best source for historical research.

Walter Rodney

Walter Rodney, (Late) March 23, 1942 – June 13, 1980 will be concentrated on in this place. Rodney developed into an intellectual and scholar and is recognized as one of the Caribbean's most brilliant minds. He published is thesis, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, in 1970.²⁹ This thesis illustrated his duality as an intellectual and activist as he challenged the prevailing assumptions about African history and put forth his own ideas and models for analyzing the history of oppressed peoples. Rodney combined his scholarship with activism and became a voice for the under-represented and disenfranchised – this distinguished him from his academic colleagues. Influenced by the Black Power Movement in the U.S., third world revolutionaries and Marxist theory, Rodney began to actively challenge the status quo. This must have fueled the publication of his popular book: "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa".³⁰ The book is a significant milestone not just as an exposure but also a work of science in the field of political economy. The book has provided us with exactly three hundred and sixteen pages with the fiddled history of the rape, retardation and deliberate destruction of the

people and economic of the African continent for the benefit of the people of Europe. The work has remained one of the best materials that unveils the Africa economic exploitations and receives wide acceptation among African students especially Nigeria students. Also published books like: "A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881-1905"; "A political call to action; People's Power", "No Dictator", and children's books like: "Kofi Baadu Out of Africa" and "Lakshmi Out of India". Indeed his works cannot be neglected when discussing the impacts of history scholars to Nigerian educational system.

Adiele E. Afigbo

The book "Emergence Themes and Methods in Africa Studies "Essay in Honour of Adiele E. Afigbo", edited by Toyin Falola and Adam Paddock best explains the impacts of this erudite historian to the educational society of Nigeria and even beyond.³¹ The book which was organized in honour of this eminent professor was to recognize his distinguished career characterized by three primary elements of his professional career; his contribution to African Historiography, his record as an impassioned teacher, and his long standing record of civil service. His several books that could not be neglected in the Nigeria Educational System ranges from The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Eastern Nigeria (1891-1929) published in 1972, remains one of the most important books on British Indirect rule system and is widely cited in recent publication on eastern Nigeria.³² He has also published "Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture", The Igbo and Their Neighbours, (1980) among others has remain an important reference material on the Eastern Nigeria. He has published over 100 articles where he tackled issues on politics, economics and various items of socio-cultural history. Afigbo is an editor of many journals. His displayed interest toward Nigeria Education System was covered by his article "An Unified System of Education Policy".

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza

Zeleza, a presidential professor of History and Africa-American Studies has published more than 24 books most of which were focus on Africa and Political Economy. "In search of Africa Diasporas "Testimonies and Encounters", the over 500 pages book which was intended to fill gaps in areas such as Africa Politics, History, law, Religion, Culture, Sociology, Literature, Philosophy, Visual Arts, Art History, Geography, Language, Health, and Social Welfare.³³ His other intellectual-entertaining books includes among others: Africa History: Rise and Decline of Academic Terrorism, (1983), An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800-1970, (1975), A Modern Economic History of Africa Vol. 1,: In the Nineteenth Century (1993). The book "A Modern Economic History of Africa Vol. 1,: In the Nineteenth Century" provides synthesis on Modern African Economic History in the nineteenth century. The six part-501pages book covered the four continents of Africa in environmental and demographical change, Agricultural Production, Mining, Manufacturing, Domestic and Regional Trade, International Trade

and Imperialism.³⁴ The book enjoined the readers with a critique of the different approaches to the study of African Economic History. It analyses the Marxists, Dependency and Neo-classical approaches and corrected it Thematically, Geographically, and Historically. His impact cannot be overemphasized in correcting and rewriting West Africa Economy History. It has remains the contact point for researchers and student in the field of economic history and in turn impacted the Nigeria educational society immeasurably.

Stephen Oladipo Arifalo

"S.O. Arifalo: A treasure of hope and courage" published by Adetiba Victor remains the most published text that exposes the impact of the legend to the Nigeria Educational System.³⁵ The 224 pages book addresses Arifalo has as an eminent scholar, areputable and distinguished historian, and a University don. Truly, his numerous contributions to the establishment of history departments in most Nigeria universities are appreciation worthy; he was noted as one of the pioneer founder of the department of History and International Studies of Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State in Nigeria. Professor Arifalo is a rare combination of God's rich and matchless grace and the rigorous discipline of the academic. His diligence, foresight and distinctive leadership style has pedestal him to a great height worthy of this historical study. Arifalo has combine all elements of socio-cultural diversities among the Nigerian people, historical values and the concept of Africanism with intellectual vigour to channel a new and moderate course for self-determination, especially for the Yoruba race and Nigeria as a whole. His most widely held works was the "Historical consciousness among traditional African societies". The book has remained the historical stimulus to history student mostly in Nigeria Universities. Indeed he has left a landmark in the system. An annual lecture series was named after his indelible landmarks in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The series which was titled: "First Professor S.O Arifalo Memorial Lecture", enjoyed Professor Olukoya Ogen as the first guest speaker of the annual event.³⁶ In the lecture which was held in 2014 Professor Ogen uncovered his immense impact on educational society of Nigeria using the University as a popular example.

Conclusion

While I drive towards conclusion, it will be unfair if I decide no to mention other history scholars who have also contributed immensely to Nigeria Educational system. Of course the role of eminent scholars like: C.C. Ifemesia, E.A. Ayandele, R.A. Adeleye and J.A. Atanda, Prof. Olukoya Ogen, E. Ola Abiola, Micheal Crowther, P.O.

Olatunbosun, S.A Balogun, Abdullahi Smith, G.O Gbadamosi, Kalli A. Yusuf Gazali, Adebayo Emmanuel Afe, among listless numbers of others. Their impacts and roles in the system cannot be underrated.

However, the choice of this discourse was influenced by the aim to join these eminent scholars one day like today. What interest me most during the course of this research was their life, their dedication and their choice to leave no stone untouched to achieve their ambitions. This I hope will also serve the same lesson for the readers. While am mindful of my academical temperament, I must recall your attention to the fact that the paper had served the reader with incalculable impacts of these careerchallenging scholars with reference to their most famous or most impacted works. The paper stated with a short survey of the state of educational system and how history became part of the system. It claims that history was among the first set of disciplines introduced at the arrival of Missionaries education and also established that history was also part of crucial issues thought in the traditional educational system before the coming of the European. As noted earlier in the introduction, the writing zeal of the paper is without the intention to impose one scholar on the other or to exempt any of them as unimportant, "since the paper must be read and scholars must be assessed, then some of them must appear". Generally, scholars are employed to attempt a critical review and juxtaposition of the two interwoven topics on Africa Development. These are How Europe Underdeveloped Africa by Walter Rodney, and How Africa Underdeveloped Africa by Stanley. C. Igwe.³⁷ Though, Stanley submitted that his book does not enter as a centre to the historiography treatise of the renowned pan-Africanist, which is Walter Rodney. However, this paper is not claiming that the scholars have contributed their all-in-all to the system (except those that have kicked the bucket), but should not surrender yet as the system has not reached its developmental apogee.

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